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**Memorandum for:**

25 April 1983

The attached was requested by Mark Miller, Chairman of the Technology Transfer Intelligence Committee's Working Group on France. It will be used as part of a SIG-directed study on the loss of strategically significant technologies through France. The final draft will be submitted to the SIG in August 1983.

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**E U R A****Office of European Analysis  
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Draft Contribution to TTIC

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French Attitude and Policy Toward COCOM.

The Mitterrand government's concern over the transfer of technology to the Soviet Bloc is partially reflected in a renewed interest in COCOM although Paris remains skeptical of US proposals for reform. France admits that decades of political and economic considerations have weakened COCOM's effectiveness and advocates a tightening of export controls. French officials, however, believe recent US proposals to strengthen COCOM are too broad to be practically enforced. Instead, they propose that COCOM members agree to narrow the lists of restricted products to clearly strategic goods and then allow virtually no exceptions. According to the French view, items that use obsolescent technology, that are readily available in the Soviet Bloc or through non-COCOM countries, or that have no identifiable military use have no place on the COCOM lists.

The French also see US efforts to strengthen the COCOM control list through the addition of new dual-use technologies, many of which they believe have a questionable military application as a thinly disguised attempt to restrict legitimate East-West trade. France is equally suspicious that US reluctance to delete from the controlled lists items using non-state-of-the-

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art technology is commercially motivated and aimed at blocking the expansion of competitive French exports of second-generation technology. Moreover France rejects as unrealistic proposals to restrict exports of broadly defined defense industries because they cannot be enforced. [REDACTED]

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The Mitterrand government, nevertheless, has enacted significantly tighter internal procedures for approving exports to the Soviet Bloc to ensure that military-strategic concerns are taken into consideration. Moreover, French government officials maintain that they rigidly enforce an internal export control list for militarily relevant goods. This list, however, apparently contains a "grandfather" clause for goods ordered before the Mitterrand government came to power and has not been made available to other COCOM members. [REDACTED]

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France's new procedures and its own export control list could weaken future interest in COCOM participation. If Paris believes it can safeguard its security needs adequately through internal controls, it will weigh more heavily the commercial and political problems posed by COCOM membership. The deeply rooted and broadlybased French desire to play a role independent of the two superpowers limits French willingness to subordinate its security policies to multilateral fora. Moreover, Paris already tends to think of COCOM as an extension of NATO and has resisted efforts to establish a military subcommittee for COCOM in Paris. France continues to block measures it believes are aimed

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[redacted]

at turning COCOM into a policy coordinating forum and insists on maintaining COCOM's confidential, informal, and consensual nature. [redacted]

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Despite these concerns, France has not been obstructionist in recent COCOM meetings. During the most recent list review session, France supported adding to the COCOM lists new technologies with proven military application. Although France continues to have reservations about US proposals to discuss restricting other high technologies, including those associated with energy development, it has not blocked special meetings and has been willing to listen to the US case. We believe France will continue to contribute to COCOM actively and constructively as long as the basic nature of the organization remains unchanged and the established criteria and procedures for export controls are maintained. We believe France will continue to advocate tightening COCOM controls through clearly delimiting the restricted lists and will require the US to present rigorous evidence that controlled goods have direct and discernible military application. [redacted]

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